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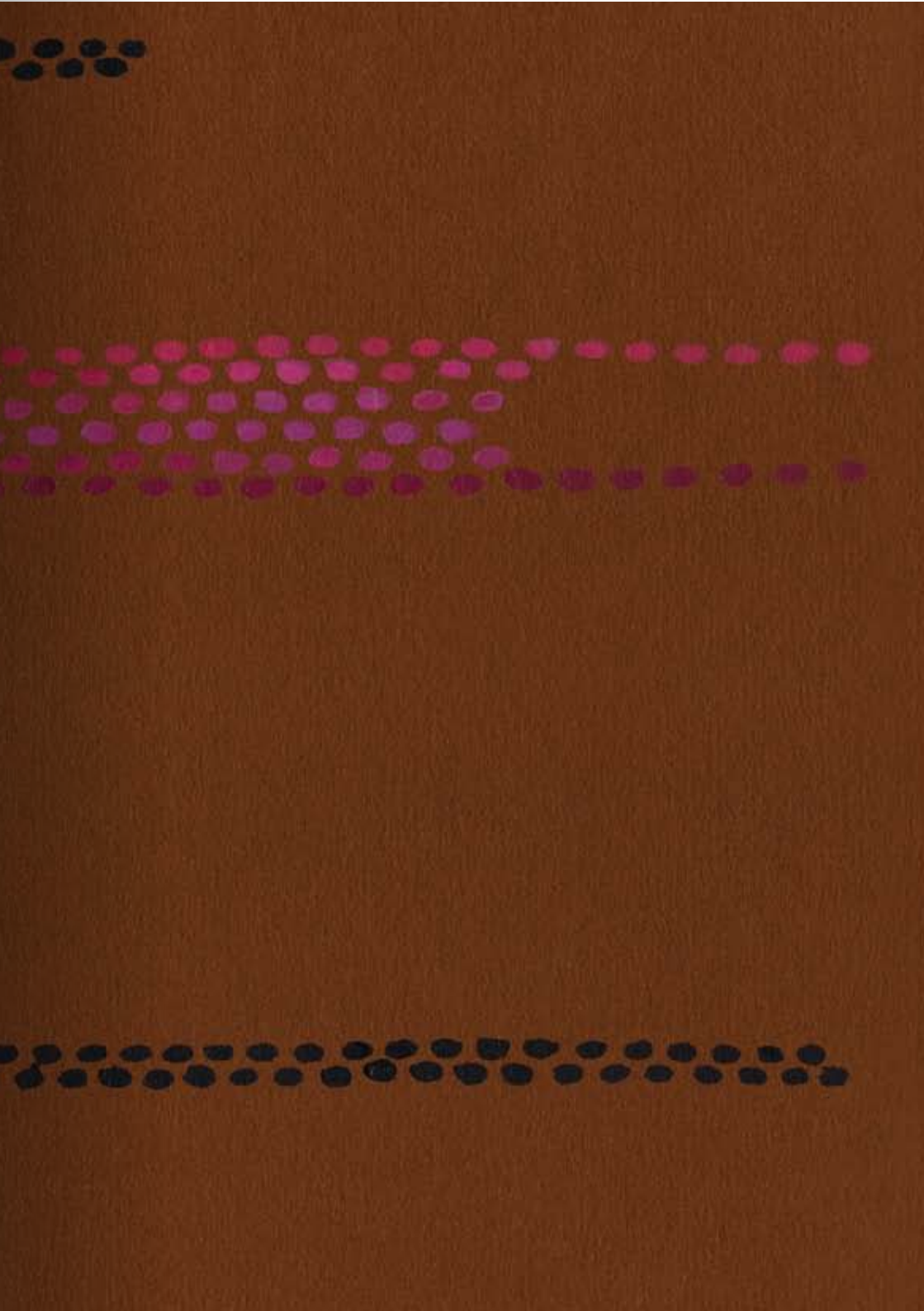
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homing



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'Could anything have been placed in here without your knowledge?'
[Airline Employee, Heathrow Airport, 2009]

homing

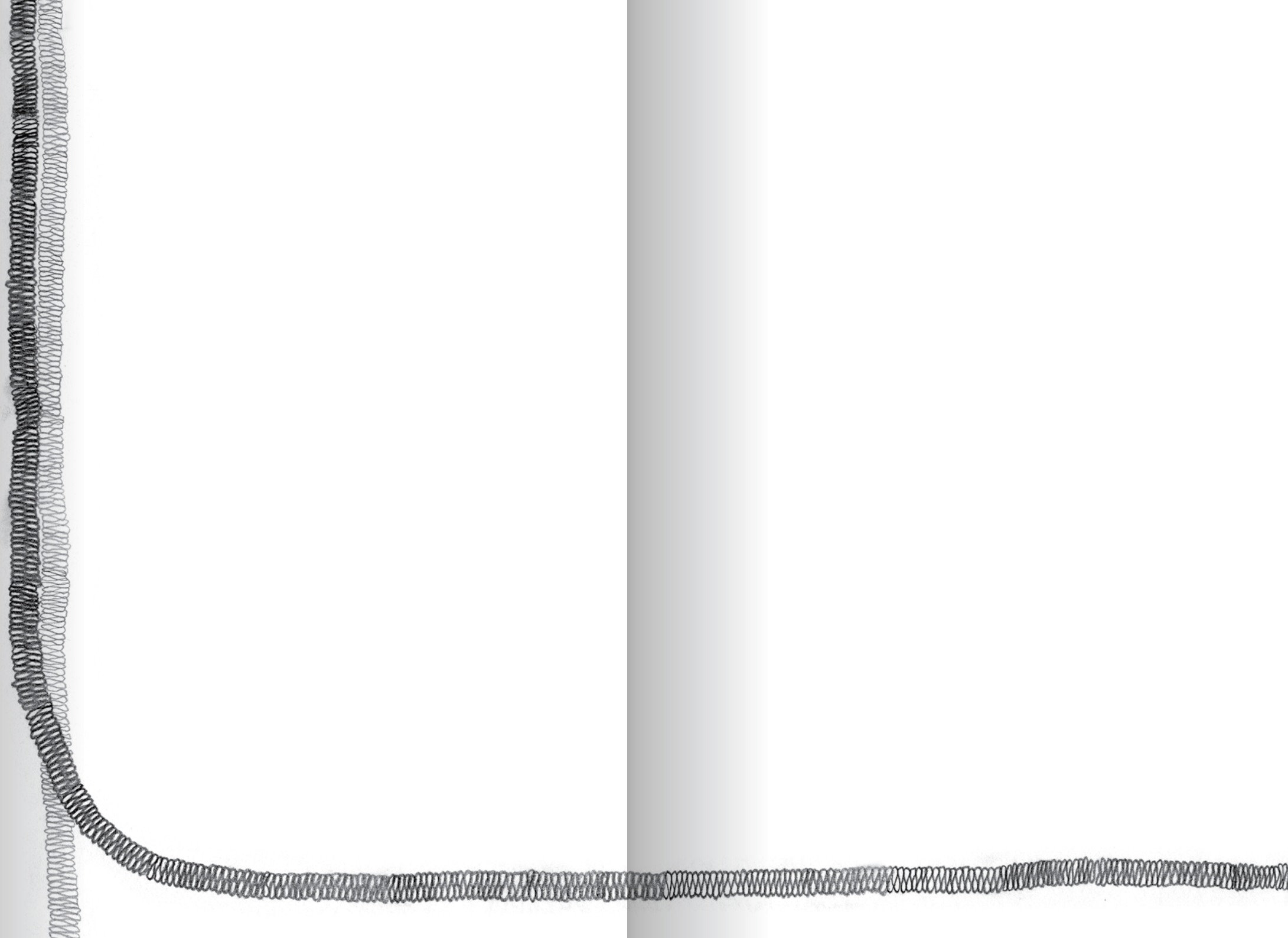
POEMS by paul hullah
DRAWINGS by susan mowatt



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Lunaria



A WAY OF WINNING

What went west and what remains we
Cannot ascertain for certain, so
The best thing when this lax life lets us
Down is not to ever really know. Just *go*

Like non-existent bluebirds over Dover:
We must make our home elsewhere;
Fly fast and far from fate's determined doldrums into
Daylight where invisible new seasons scent the air.

For a future fain to find us waits out there,
And a seraph sure to save us waits out there.

HOW I LOST MY MUSE AND HOW I FOUND HER TOO

She waves behind the wayward
Words I use to impregnate my pauses
Not with idle prose but busy rows

Of all the times I want to mean. She causes
Poetry like children make the world
Imagine next year's crucial suns.

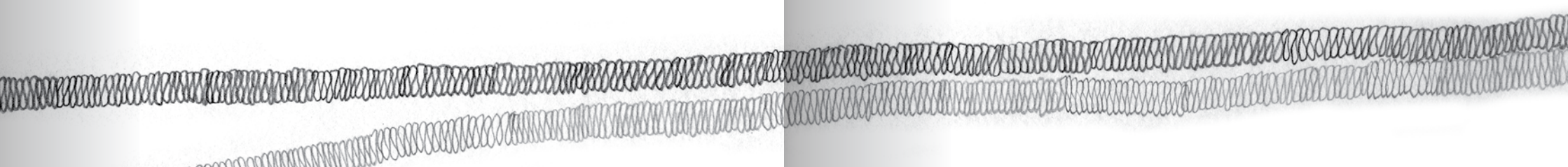
Everything goes fluid:
We have lost the solid globe
And left the pens and lines behind.

We know our selves no longer
To be held contained in grammar.
Reported speech ill fits us now

We overlap, lurch into others'
Lives and spaces that become us after
Spilling over see-through borders.

How I found my Muse became
The subject of my best attempts
To let her know the fecund flow,

To write her with the love I leave alive.



FAR FLUNG

Inviolate, in violet dress
Or cardigan the hue

Of milky tea Love steps across
Lorn years to hunt for you.

She looms like Lady Luck; you'll look
For omens to believe —

Not those she takes away with her,
But those she does not leave.

She will not leave so much but, time-
Worn gambler, you'll persist.

As chances skitter like scuffed dice
She'll sally through the brindled mist,

Inveigle you with promises,
Her midnight soul unseen

Through eyes like lights, though all she says
Is true as time, has always been.

Invade her at your peril: sow
Trust's seeds as yet unsown

And find Love's random wilderness
Already overgrown:

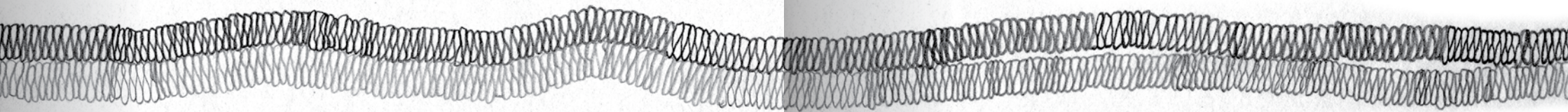
Impossible to tame, and so
Impossible to own.

MOIDERING

It's always quicker than you think,
The summoning, the fumbled start, the nights,
The days, the sting of love, the pain, the wait: the awfulness.

I ask the word for slow but no one knows
It or they do but cannot say. They've
No time left. So go the broken hours, and so do I.

I yearn to hold her slowly, as a swathe of light
Round constant star, not altering or wanting to,
In solid faith, alive, in being, true. And even now I do.



RAIN SLAKER

She stops the rain by looking at the sky.
She crushes crinkled clouds that curse and fuss
As they curl by. She whispers why
The nimbus and the cumulus

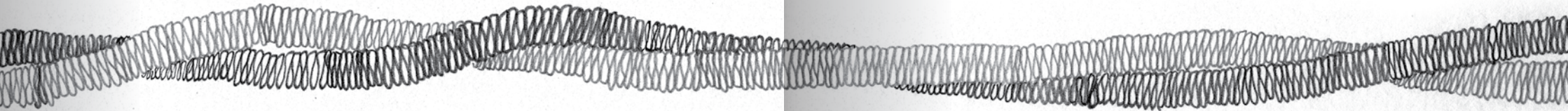
Succumb to us and all we are.
As long as she is here, I rest in peace;
She helps me guess the weather from afar:
Her wonders, suns and thunders, never cease.

NO SOFTER LANDING

I'd ken the perfume of her perfect hair
Should it suffix my senses, scent so rare;
I'd race like sprinters, follow it, repair
Like love like air; arrive from anywhere.

Remembered times, snowed woes, tanned sunburnt joys,
Are wed to years and weather, not by choice
But by the days we made them, placed them there;
They come like lights, arrive from anywhere.

From anywhere like cancer, joy, or scent,
To cleave the memories from what they meant:
Lots lamer now, afeared of hill and stair,
I still can crawl, arrive from anywhere.



SEALED

The when I knew I loved her
Lodged in moments much as these,

In bedrooms, alleys, taprooms,
At the slumber or the bells,

Sex or shopping, showers, damp hair,
Silly minutes; it was there.

(Kindly glances in the morning,
When we neither of us cared.)

But love is fair; sealed in the snowdrift
And the snow plough, absolutely,

Everywhere. In all our moments:
See her, there.

SAY WHEN

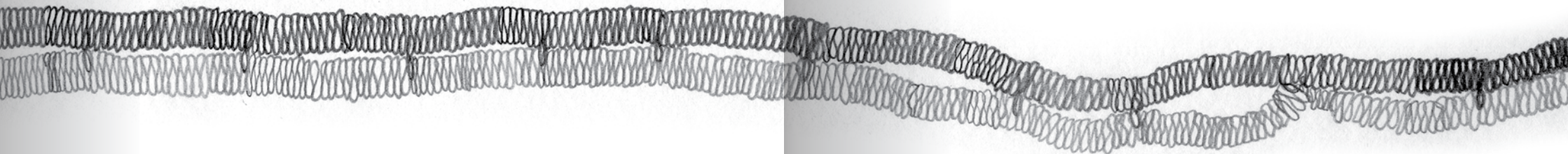
When I walk home from work
Or pubs or coffee shops or prison
Cells, I stop and stare at passers
By and wonder, are there ones

Like her among the dross and
Debris, spooks who lost the plot
Like me? Which ghosts would she resemble?
Are there any other healers?

Are they angels? Are there diamonds
In the dustbins? In each face I glimpse
A glimmer of a hope I once latched
On to but is gone now. Faintest traces,

Like a shadow never watched, brief
Moisture on a mirror, ice in sun,
The remnants of a headache, shattered
Headlamps after accidents are done.

I need her not because of this (for
This is mine) but mainly for the dead
Days, for the ways I weep when weaving
Home not knowing who or where or what we are.



LOCO

Youth's messengers are years since
Gone, the *Dear Jaune* e-mails offed into the ether:
Just me and my big heart still here

With all the words and ways that wanted changing.
True loneliness is not to do with loved ones or
The lack of them, and once you've done

The math on that you'll find Love
Can live anywhere and prosper: odd, ungently idling,
Come a curio, like nettles in a disused concrete lot,

You'll never miss your home or leave a trace.
One cold rheumatic morning you'll
Be waiting at a railway station, years

Stacked huge behind in knee-deep drifts,
Love's fresh address tucked in the prayer book in your pocket.
When your trains leave you aren't on them yet

But you've become aware like heat
It's locomotives you were waving at
And not the people on them

Semaphoring hale hellos
That meant goodbyes
Too, back at you.

PLIED

Outbound traffic full to split:
Inbound vehicles empty — how
It is — and I am unbound anywhere
These days, but gliding far away

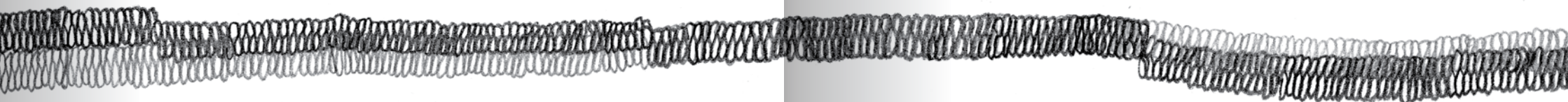
From all the anchors and addresses
I once clung to like a lifeboat, like spurned lovers
Hug their perfect past. My arms long
Tired of reaching out

So sometimes I feel filthy when I wake up
In a life that draws me selflessly to faith.
The arch imagination
Of a firework designer

Could not foresee such patterns
Love striates on skies of nothingness,
And no one knows what's outside love
Until the fire is ashes...

*And when I am up, I am up,
And when I am down, I am down,
And when I am only half way up
I am still down...*

But I'm still *here*.



VENT

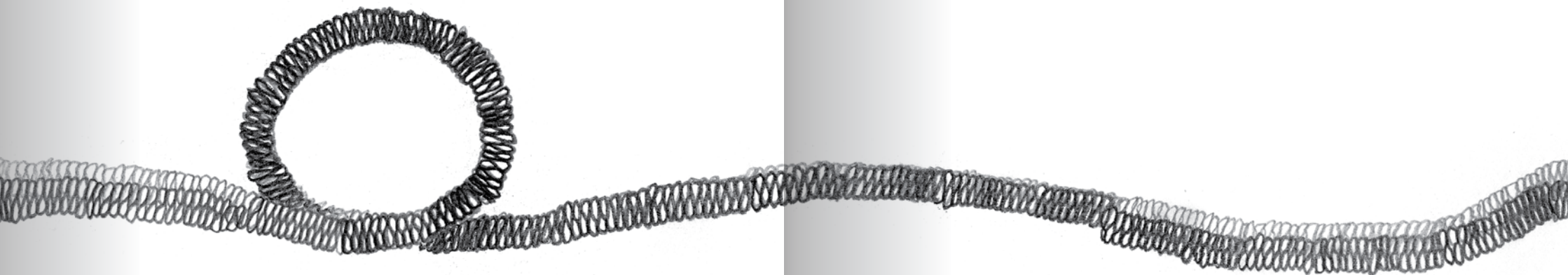
If stars belong to everyone,
I'll take my old one down and wash it;
I'll write about it so it's real
Then put it in my raincoat pocket.

I'll fetch it to your fern-flanked grave
And lie there on the turf above;
I'll keep it in my hand until we meet
And by its light will see anew your lambent love.

I'LL SEE MYSELF OUT

Win my war by waking up
And throwing down my gun.
Feel the soil beneath my shoes:
My journey has begun.

Pluck these thorns from tired sides,
Bid these bygones bye.
Learn to like this blameless life;
Love, let my loathing lie.



OUTSURVIVORS

Poppy, musk rose, columbine:
Taken home before your time;
Nightjoys, toys, and love of mine,
Poppy, musk rose, columbine.

Seagull, lapwing, hummingbird:
Taken whence without a word;
Tales and plans and thanks unheard,
Seagull, lapwing, hummingbird.

Bloater, swordfish, stickleback:
Taken, gone to not come back;
White of bliss to black of lack,
Bloater, swordfish, stickleback.

Pony, woman, marmoset:
Taken yonder, with us yet;
Easy sometimes to forget,
Easiest to not forget.

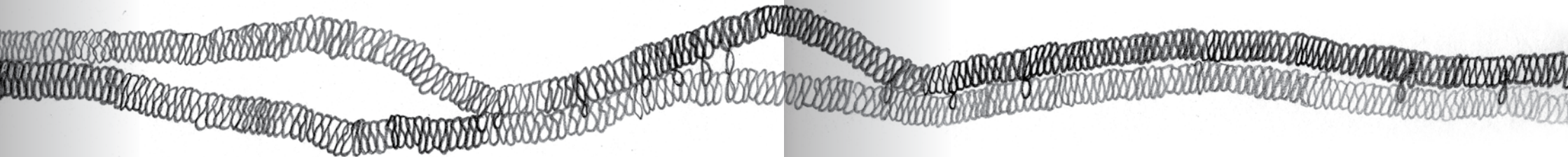
ALL THE COLOURS RAINBOWS AREN'T

I thought, she's gone,
And so have I,
But didn't cuss or cry.

My boxes all seemed empty, less
Than nothing in, no hope contained, so thus
No living: darkest dimness

O'er old light, where rainbows aren't,
Inside my heart, where bright things fade
Like long lost wars, beyond this glade's

Locked gate. And yet I haven't gone.
Not yet. I somehow stay: like longing, not
Like leaving. In all the colours rainbows aren't. Kept on.



GOLIATH

Fecund moon, halfway e-
clipsed, kaput kimono shreds of stars;
She's making lists
Of loves and losses, lunar life and ours,

And I will be first on both
And you will be there too,
For nothing real can top us
Out here in the night's dark hue.

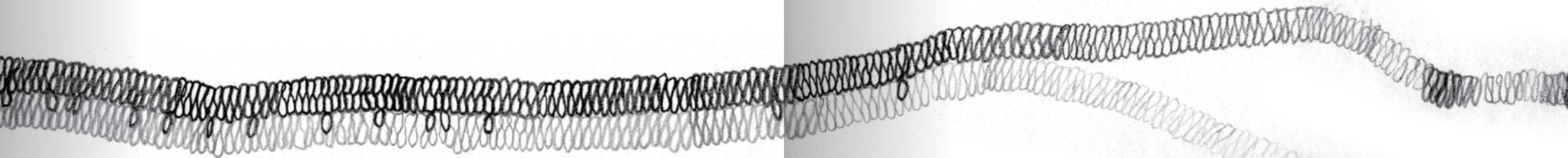
Our trust is this verandah now
From which we watch the skies
Fill full of hope that we have wished up there,
To hold the moon that moves and never dies.

The world will be
The shepherd I'll not want, as Love
Has been the amnesty I did not crave, deserve, or need,
But grew to guard like fire on winter nights with you.

END TO END (STUFF)

No eastbound breeze, no nightingale,
For nought survives of busted faith
Bar blank days dawning, scattershot blame,
And lonesome *moi*: this blue guitar.

The now I know is far from clear,
Skies swoop to close or disappear.
All that remains is Love, down here,
As was, as *is*; bides nigh, close near.



RARA AVIS

Three rare white ravens have been rescued after they were found starving to death in a churchyard... It is thought the birds, which have snow-white plumage and blue eyes, had been abandoned by their parents... and one had damaged feathers, as if it had been attacked. Manager of the Weardale Animal Sanctuary Sally Rowley said, 'They were skin and bone and were just sitting, not moving...'

[*The Daily Mail*, 11 June 2007]

Love rouse me from my fog-banked daze,
Remind me how, on clearer days,
The mountains' peaks
Peek through grey haze;
Why all ways may be well.

Love wake me where the whitest
Blackbirds brighten bleakest nights,
Hope rare but there,
Albino ravens lit by lights;
See all sights shall be well.

Love move as mist-bow, seadog shine,
Love fogdog for the birds to find;
Make damage right,
Make fractures fine;
So all signs say be well.

Love infiltrate my skin, and bone
Bends back into the swords that shone
Before slug rust
Dried saline tears;
Yea all years can be well.

Love's blue-eyed snow-white raven soul,
Stay hungry in the wake of all
This black regret's
Unfinished pall;
Be all my blood. Be well.

VERY LIGHTS*

However many skies may be,
Time's single sky abides above for me.

Bereft of choice, beneath my azure bowl,
I'm plunging up and into new today.

I'm Very Lights in daybreak's zinc-grey velveteen.
I'm trying to begin; excelsior to win.

As well we've seen in Death's dark airports, rushing
Past Departure Lounges, Life now needs

Rebuilding. Phoenix, sing. Our
Desperate telepathy like circling gulls,

Ourselves the grounded wintry beach, and
Not the sea. Contained and charted field of flight, the sea

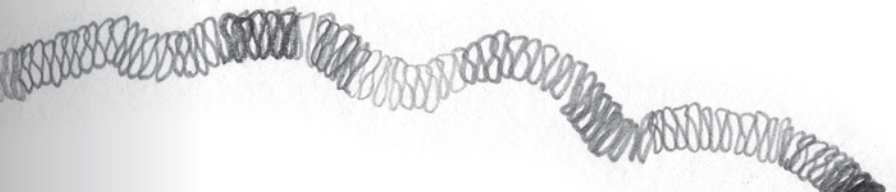
Is skinter vast old oceans gaping penniless
With neither home nor firmament,

Indigent and destitute with absences and lack,
Like anagrams of silence

Trailed beneath Time's cobalt yonder.
I will rise like lit neutrinos. Phoenix soar. Turn

Twilit perse to silver: honing, holding, hoping, *homing*,
Till I know no brighter blues, no feeling richer.

* 'Very Lights' were coloured flares, named after their inventor Edward W. Very (1847–1910), fired from a modified pistol in wartime in order to signal presence or presence in distress and need of rescue, usually at night but also during daytime.



LOVE THAT ONE WHOSE NAME YOU KNOW

Love that one whose name you know
Will be the wind-sung word that wakes you; cicada
Or birdsong, barking hound, they call that name
And when you hear it you will rise reborn and go.

Love that one whose mind you know
Before you have to delve or dither in the dusklands low,
Whose eyes and lips remain there as
The night and day remain to reinvent the glow.

Love that one who lets you go
Beyond the snow of happenstance or skin, beyond
The glow of honeyed moons, as far
As unmapped regions' blazing suns can show.

Love that one who lets your spirit grow
Toward a better version of the life you paused to know
Because it seemed the best, brimful of ease, fast surety in flow
Atop uncertain streams, before the place you never thought to go.

Love that one whose name you do not know
How to forget in waking or in sleeping, slow
The fast time down and go to find that one below
The surface of your ken, above the winds of days that rush and blow.

Love that one whose ways you know
Are something you can never fully know, and you grow
Never tired of never knowing wholly, never seek to capture. So
Just love that one, because you never know.

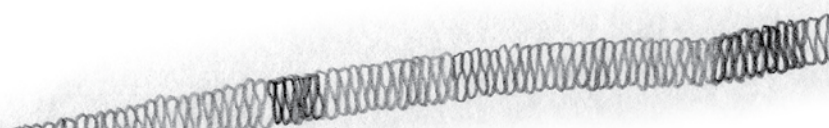
OR IT WOULDN'T BE YOU

Behold these flames conspire to burn our roses,
Behold this desert swallow our oasis;
We have to learn to live all by ourselves: it
Takes so long, so very long. It brings us home.

You hear a word you have not heard for decades,
Then you seem to hear no other words,
No other words all day: just that one, all the time,
And everywhere. That word for us is 'Love'.

There was another time. The rest is here.
It's what we cherished, once paraded, long lost ancient
Clothes inside Time's wardrobe that could never see
The light of day again. But daylight came though,

Dandling fancy round old dark like first-found fire
And we beheld it. Now we start again.



THE LIGHT OF MY DAYS IS ABLAZE

The light of my days is not cold any more,
But flushes with flames that were absent of yore,
New suns born of skinship, hot heat of your

Hand in my heart where it soothes and will stay.
So should shiverers say, in the cold light of day
All is gone, I can warm them to wonder the way

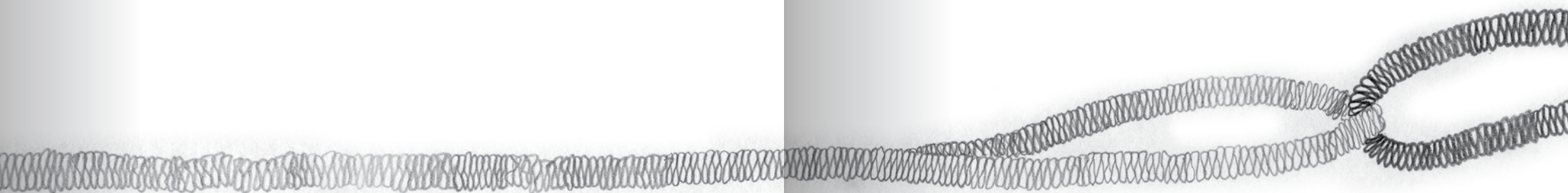
We set fire and *fires*, and I am amazed
Just how many: your torches, the wondersome ways
That the light of my days is not cold, but ablaze.

TO RETURN TO

The goodness you burn
To return to will be the undoing
Of darkness, make light of black burdens
And blunders, rend years worth reviewing.

The goodness you yearn
To relearn is hemmed here in her heartsong's
Melodious magical metrics,
Past all the mistakes you met mindless headlong.

The goodness you spurned
Unconcerned becomes whirlygig music
And limelights to raise you like lame men
From sickbeds with suppleness new: fit to use it.



THEY HAVE NOT GONE

Boss world, boom
'Love!' Find buckled bending ears: me,
Listening. In. Half-centuried (not out); again life looms and blooms.

Hack hurled thence barred from Eden, hanging
On by Youth's stage door for one last scoop:
The glory story, some gigantic special secret thing,

Some bright *Jeune Jaune Amour* to leave
The world on. Life igneous,
Hand them frozen hell. I'm weav-

-ing homeward tearless, fearless. Staying. In. They have not gone;
They are still here.
And even this makes sense, braids well, seams all as one,

Now I am learning Love again 'neath mistletoe
In April. Off-white winterberries, wait! Make sadness *lose*.
For nude half-numbed nomadic hearts must go

A-roaming *still*, go dancing to some fresh delights
Down hopeful days where Love allays and certain angels stray:
Time's concinnite new mornings, amber nights.

These rising roads. These vernal Very Lights.

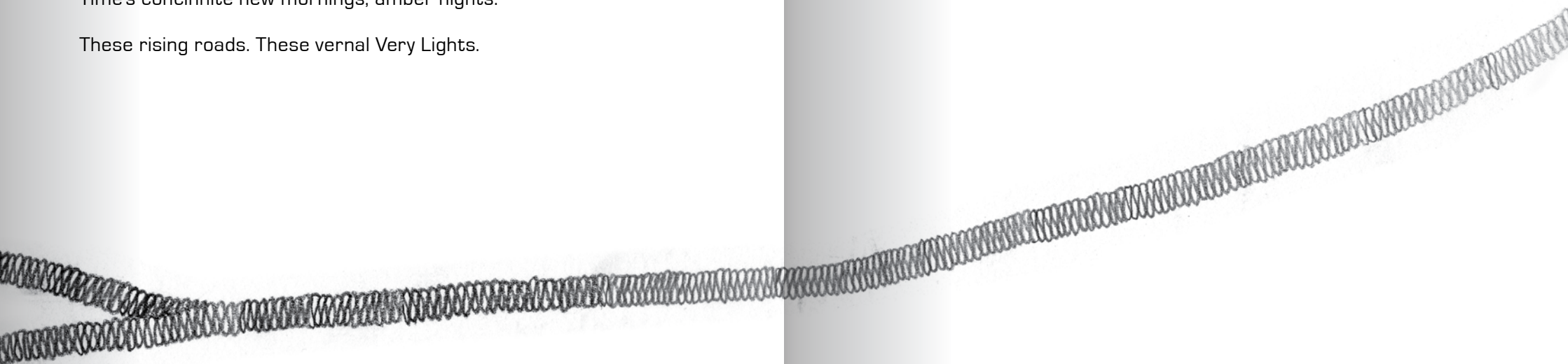
HOMING

In wintry hush I hear her call
My name from some place nice and new.
I do not dwell on where, or dwell at all,
For places do not save me; people do.

The long road back to hope lurks lined
With magic mirrors fibbing still
Of futures free of fates unkind,
But mirrors will not mend me; people will.

My truth will come and find me old,
Remind me how I once began.
Let winters wane beside my soul,
For winters cannot warm me; people can.

And everywhere I see her ghost:
That young girl's coat, a roadside bar,
A Spanish film, peach jam on toast,
For places are not haunted; people are.



To those we lose, and those we leave, and all those we love.
This book is for you.

Homing is artwork and attitude born of living and loss. Loss comes to shatter the patterns we weave in our lives. It turns meaning to mayhem: shreds and shards, remnants and rags. But we remain too. We start again: begin anew. Never alone, we connect; we continue. We stitch and bind the debris that is left until we know we are still living. Then we know that we have woven home.

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Susan Mowatt is an artist based in East Lothian, Scotland. She is a Lecturer in Intermedia at Edinburgh College of Art.

www.weavinghome.org



